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FARE REWARD FOR DOMESTIC FLIERS TRAVELLING LIGHT

DGCA separates base fare and service charge, paving the way for concessions to travellers checking in without baggage

PAY ONLY FOR THE SERVICES YOU REQUIRE

Earlier, base fare was bundled with services like preferential seating, meal or drink charges (except water), access to lounge, check-in baggage, sports equipment and music instrument charges, and valuable baggage fee. With its Friday's notification, the DGCA has unbundled base fare and service charges. Now, fliers will get to pay for only those services they opt for

LINKED TO TICKET PRICE CAPPING ORDER

- In January, air travel turned costlier after the fare price bands were hiked by 10%-30%. It was described as an extraordinary but temporary measure to help the sector reach pre-Covid flight level
- The DGCA's notification says the relief will be extended to fliers only when the extraordinary fare order ceases to be applicable

7-kg
WEIGHT CEILING ON CABIN BAGS YOU CAN CARRY ALONG

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Datesheet out for poll exam in four states, UT

THE SCHEDULE

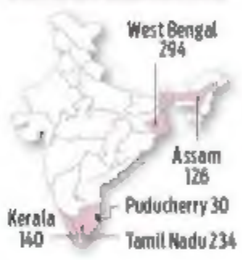
WEST BENGAL
Eight phases
March 27, April 1, 6, 10, 17, 22, 26, 29

ASSAM
Three phases
March 27, April 1, 6

TAMIL NADU, PUDUCHERRY, KERALA
April 6

COUNTING OF VOTES
May 2

SEATS UP FOR GRABS



MODEL CODE

The Model Code of Conduct comes into play from the moment the poll schedule is announced. It ends with the declaration of the election outcome

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

THE onset of summer will coincide with soaring political temperatures in the country as four states and a Union Territory will see electoral heat in March-end and April. The Election Commission of India announced the poll schedule for Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry in the south and West Bengal and Assam in the east, sounding the bugle for the next big battle for states.

The assembly elections in Bengal will be Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee's biggest test yet in the face of a saffron onslaught while Assam will see the ruling BJP face a challenge from a plethora of coalitions. Among the two southern states, the Congress nurtures hope of returning to power in Kerala. In TN, the two national parties will piggyback on the local players — Congress on the DMK and BJP on the AIADMK. Puducherry is heading for an interesting fight amid defections from the Congress to the BJP, leading to President's Rule.

CEC Sunil Arora

The BJP, under the leadership of JP Nadda, will seek to assert its status as a pan-India party as it hopes to reap political dividends of the Citizenship Amendment Act in Assam and Bengal. Banking heavily on turncoats from the ranks of the TMC, the BJP is hoping to build on the massive gains it made in Bengal in the 2019 LS poll, bagging 18 seats and over 40% vote share. In Assam, the party, in alliance with regional players, will seek to outsmart the Opposition, while the Congress-AIUDF combine will attempt to consolidate minority votes.

In Kerala, the BJP, which had polled about 15% votes in 2016, will make a pitch to establish itself as the third force. To find a foothold in TN, the party is experimenting with caste equations by promoting Dalit and OBC faces. The Congress, which is grappling with leadership issue and infighting, has grim chances in Bengal, where it's contesting in alliance with the Left, but is looking at making some gains in Assam. But the party's main focus is on Kerala, especially because Rahul Gandhi is MP from Wayanad, though the Left Front's performance in the local body polls is a cause of worry for the Congress-led UDF.

India snaps out of technical recession

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

WITH the economy finally coming out of technical recession, growing marginally at 0.4 per cent in the third quarter of 2020-21, the government on Friday said it expected the GDP to contract by 8 per cent for the whole financial year.

"Real GDP growth of 0.4 per cent in Q3 of 2020-21 has returned the economy to the pre-pandemic times of positive growth rates. It is also a reflection of a further strengthening of V-shaped recovery," read a Finance Ministry statement.

However, in its second advance estimates, the National Statistical Office (NSO) has projected 8 per cent contraction in 2020-21, up from 7.7 per cent predicted on its earlier forecast in January.

Experts claimed that while the growth remained flat, the real recovery will be visible in the final quarter. "My understanding is that the real push will come in the Q4 2021, because lockdowns on many sectors, particularly hospitality and travel, eased substantially during this quarter. It is hoped that it remains that way, given the uptick in Covid-19 cases in some pockets and in some states," said Sanjay Kumar, partner, Deloitte India.

Meanwhile, the output of eight core sectors returned to positive territory, growing marginally by 0.1 per cent in January. P16

CM asks Centre not to allow TN water project, will fight it legally, politically

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka Government on Friday reiterated that it will not allow Tamil Nadu's project to use surplus Cauvery water through a river-linking project by building a canal from Cauvery to Vaigai-Gundar, and said it will fight against it legally and politically.

As the project is expected to affect the state's interests, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa has written to the Central Government asking it not to allow Tamil Nadu to go ahead with the project, Law and Parliamentary Minister Basavaraj Bommai told mediapersons. Earlier, Water Resources Minister Ramesh

Jarkiholi and Bommai held a meeting with legal experts, including Advocate General Prabhuling Navadgi, to discuss the inter-state river water dispute.

Bommai said the TN project to utilize 45 tmcft of water is in violation of Inter-State Water Dispute Act and Karnataka will question it in the court. As per the Act, even surplus water has to be allocated and this has to be decided by the tribunal. Even before that happens, Tamil Nadu has gone ahead with a project that is against Karnataka's interests, the Law Minister said.

The Karnataka Government has decided to implead itself in a case filed by a farmer.

"Individuals cannot file a case in inter-state matters as they do not have any locus standi, and such petitions have been dismissed earlier. They have not made Karnataka a party, but we have decided to implead in that case and present our case before the Madurai bench of the Madras High Court," he said. CONTINUED ON: P6

EXPRESS READ

Cricketer Vinay Kumar announces retirement

Bengaluru: Veteran Karnataka medium pacer R Vinay Kumar, who also represented India and led his state team to successive Ranji Trophy titles, on Friday announced his retirement from international and first-class cricket. Kumar (37) played one Test, 31 ODIs and nine T20 Internationals for India. P17

Activist Naudeep Kaur granted bail by HC

Chandigarh: Around six weeks after her arrest, labour rights activist Naudeep Kaur was on Friday granted bail by the Punjab and Haryana High Court. Kaur was arrested in Haryana's Sonipat for allegedly gheraoing an industrial unit and demanding money from a company on January 12.

KARNATAKA CORNER

Disha to return home after 15 days

Climate activist Disha Ravi, who received bail in the toolkit case earlier this week, will continue to stay in Delhi for the next two weeks. Speaking to TNIE, her mother Manjula said, "I am not very sure what the actual reasons are, but we have been told that she will be back home only after two weeks." P8

Bypolls could be held before May 2

While the schedule for bypolls to Maski, Basavakalyan and Sindagi constituencies is yet to be officially announced, Election Commissioner Sunil Arora on Friday stated that all poll results, including the bypolls, will be announced on May 2. This means that the bypolls will be held anytime before May 2. P8

School must have proper access road: Lokayukta

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka Lokayukta, has initiated suo motu proceedings after *TNIE* published a report ('Hop, skip and jump takes a new meaning at this school', February 24) and directed the authorities to redress the grievances of students and teachers by providing a permanent access road to the Government Primary School at Vignana Nagar at K R Puram.

Referring to the report, Lokayukta Justice P Vishwanatha Shetty observed that "the failure on the part of the authorities concerned to provide proper access road to the school, in my considered view, falls within the meaning of 'maladministration' under Section 2(1) of the Karnataka Lokayukta Act and the hardship or injustice caused to the students is required to be addressed."

"...it is desirable for me to consider the report published in *TNIE* as source material to exercising the suo motu power under Section 7(1)(b) and 9(3)(a) of the Karnataka Lokayukta Act. Accordingly, I have directed registering of suo-motu proceedings", Justice Shetty said in the order passed on Friday. P9

EXPRESS IMPACT

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